

5-21-1889

**J. Owen Dorsey Submits Abstract of Address Made by Little Standing Buffalo a Ponca, to the Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs Relating to Affairs Requiring Attention at the Ponca Agency**

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Smithsonian Institution,

Bureau of Ethnology, Wash'n, D.C., May 21, 89.

The Hon. Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs,

Dear Sir:--

The following abstract of the recent address made to you in my presence and hearing is respectfully submitted by

*J. Owen Dorsey*

Ethnologist.

Abstract of the address of Little Standing Buffalo or Yellow Buffalo, a Ponka Indian, made May 20, 1889.

"Grandfather, I wish to tell you about something that I did not speak of the last time I ~~saw~~ saw you.

There is one Indian custom which I have been trying to break up, and I now ask your help in abolishing it. The Indians have their daughters marked with needles on their foreheads, chests, and backs, for which they have to pay a great deal, such as horses, blankets, hogs, fresh meat, etc. This tends to keep the Ponkas poor. The chiefs receive the pay, in return for which they authorize the "spotting," and it is to their interest to have the custom retained. The captain of the police took his three daughters from the school and had them tattooed, in spite of my efforts to prevent it. I appealed to the captain of the police, the agent, and the chiefs; but they did not help me. The only person who sided with me was the teacher (superintendent of the school?). I tried to get the captain of the police discharged, but he gave a horse to the interpreter, and that prevent-

*Thomas Holmes, superintendent of Ponka school,*  
*not Chas Collins, since Chas now dead*



(2)

ed it.

I also wish my friend here, one of your employees (Frank La Flesche), to come with the inspector as his interpreter, for we have no good interpreters. In this matter, I feel that the only interpreters to be had at the Agency, or on the reservation, will side with the chiefs, and so they will not interpret correctly."

I, the undersigned, certify on honor that I read the above abstract to Little Standing Buffalo or Yellow Buffalo, in his own language, and he accepted it as correct. I have reasons for believing what he says about the difficulty of obtaining a Ponka interpreter, having had some experience. Charles Le Clerc, my former interpreter is with the Dakotas; his brother, David, the former Agency interpreter, is (from what I have heard) infirm, probably bedridden, and unable to serve. Gen. Crook and Capt. John G. Bourke (3d. cavalry, now at the Library of the War Department) can tell you about the trouble in getting an interpreter in the winter of 1880-81.

*J. Owen Dorsey.*



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OFFICE OF  
INDIAN AFFAIRS.  
Rec'd MAY 22

1889.

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J. Owen Dorsey

Submit abstract of  
address made by  
Little Standing Buffalo  
a Ponca, to the Asst.  
Commissioner of Indian  
Affairs, recently, re.  
to affairs requiring  
attention at the Ponca  
Agency.

To Secty May 24/89

A. S. P.

Stewart

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DEPARTMENT  
OF  
INTERIOR  
INDIAN

MAY 25 1889

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J. Owen Dorsey